

EMIGRÉ

THE MAGAZINE THAT IGNORES BOUNDARIES

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EMIGRE



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HARDKNOCKS

POETRY *By Marc Susan*



The Poet is like the prince of the clouds
Who haunts the landscape,
And rocks the author's shouting boots:
Felled on earth amidst the shouting crowds,
He cannot walk, with the
Ghost's wings he touts.

from Charles-Pierre Boudelaine's poem "L'Albatros",
translated from the French by Marc Susan.

Los Angeles, you swallow up
nearly all the southwest's water;
nearly all its available air and light,
so you must give everything back enthusiastically
in story and song.

from Lewis MacAdams's poem "Trumpet"

I knew it was time to leave The Netherlands,
my native country, when the best poets were
starting to get white hair and the younger ones
were shouting obscenities on stage or putting
bad jokes into rhyme. That was in 1977. After
that I lived in France and Greece, and for the
past five years I have been a "resident alien"
of California.

At first I thought that the curious disintegration
of the art of poetry in the '70s and '80s was
particular to Holland, or maybe even to Europe.
But after living for some time in San Francisco
(once, in the '50s, headquarters of poets and
writers of the "Beat Generation"), I discovered
that even that poet's Mecca has lost its magic
vigor. At Lawrence Ferlinghetti's famed City
Lights bookstore, for example, poetry publica-
tions are with few exceptions banned to a
gloomy corner of the basement where hardly
anybody ever goes.

The reason for this ongoing phenomenon is
obvious. Poetry has been partly absorbed by
rock music, and its public role has been
diminished by vastly increased visual
information of all kinds available through
television, video and computers.

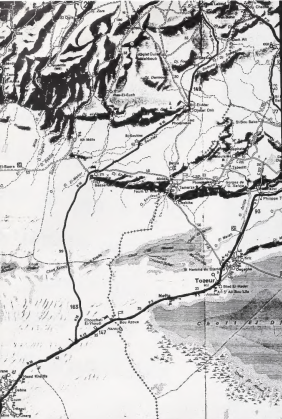
Evidence that not only poetry, but now also lit-
erature, is consequently being thrown out the
back door is everywhere. For the past year I
have lived in Los Angeles, and in that short
period of time some of the best literary
bookstores have closed down. The George
Sand bookstore on Malibu Avenue, where
owner Charlotte Dusey organizes poetry read-
ings and still cares about the poets and writers
she represents, is one of the last rare examples
of a "vanishing breed." Meanwhile, new
video-rental and computer stores have recently
opened on almost every second corner of Santa
Monica and Wilshire Boulevards.

It's too late now for accusations, and it doesn't
make sense to dwell on what was lost — we
all took part in it. But it's up to us poets
now to adapt our skills to the changing
times and make poetry function in the public
mind once again.

Santa Monica
October 1984

Marc Susan
in Santa Monica,
1984.
Photograph by
Randy VanderLans





(French)

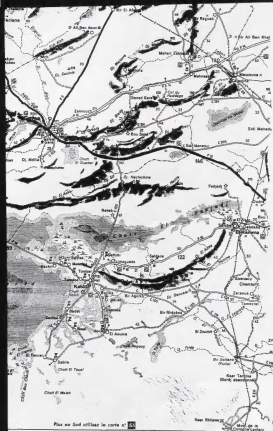
Le Tunis: entre Tozeur et Nefta.

Sur la plage infinie
Blanche et sans vie
Je poursuis le mirage
d'Un sourire interdit,
Même
Dans un vent de sable
J'écoute le bruit des vagues,
Mais
O, filles du Sahara
Où est la mer
Entre Tozeur et Nefta ?

(English)

Tunisia: between Tozeur and Nefta.

On the white and
Infinite beach
I pursue the mirage
Of a forbidden smile,
Even
In a sandstorm
I hear the waves crashing,
But
O, daughters of the Sahara
Where is the sea
Between Tozeur and Nefta ?



(English)

Traveling.

Sometimes I feel
To some godforsaken
Then I see a flow
Or I'am standing
At the track
My train comes
And I turn my back

(Dutch)

Reizen.

Soms wil ik op
Van godverlaten
Dan opeens zie
Of ik sta op
M'n trein komt
En ik keer



like traveling
en place
wer patch

in
ack

p reis

en ergens

e ik 'n bloemenveldje

't perron

mt aan

om

(Fijian)

Moku Siga e Viti

Yanuyanu katakata
Wasawasa batabata
Iteitei suasua
Itukutuku lailai

(English)

Killing Time in Fiji

Hot island
Cool ocean
Wet garden
Little news



Poetry has been partly absorbed by
rock music, and its public role has been
diminished by vastly increased visual
information of all kinds available through
television, video and computers.

VLADIMIR

NABOKOV

PAINTING BY

WILLIAM

CONE

В. Н А Б О К О В

Grandma and grandpa are downstairs in the basement watching the news. I can hear grandpa coughing in his loud way. grandma is speaking in russian to him, with the hard and sharp syllables that burn in her mouth. her severe face provides the punctuation that my grandfather tries to ignore. his massive head barely nods, eyes fixed on the television screen. the news is about russian naval craft carrying nuclear missiles very close to american shores.

I spy upon them from the recesses of the stairwell leading upstairs. they are talking about me. they only talk about me in russian. this is so I will not understand what they are saying. I heed the language that is used to keep me in ignorance. I gave up caring about what they say some time ago. it is ironic that they speak of me in russian. grandma and grandpa are almost as ashamed of being russian as they are of me.

I clamber up the stairs to the second floor. it is bare, devoid of chains and couches. my grandmother likes it that way. she says it's easier to keep the house clean when there is little or no furniture. her room is filled with the smell of turpentine and oil paints. the walls are covered with charcoal sketches of everyone but me and my grandfather. I remember one night when I ran up the driveway and looked in my grandmother's window. she was almost motionless, save for her left hand making a sketch of my mother who was sitting nude on the floor. their faces were serious, as if they saw nothing else in the world but each other. I crept away, not wanting to disturb them. in the morning, when I woke up, my mother was gone.

my grandfather's room is next to the painting room. he sleeps downstairs though, next to the big boiler. it's warmer there for him and he doesn't have to climb the stairs. grandpa has worked in railroad yards for thirty-eight years. when I come of age, I will refuse to work. I don't want to fall apart and complain like a grandfather.

the first snow of winter fell today. by the time the evening news came on, I could see we were going to have a blizzard. the schools will be closed. I don't mind school because I like to

rites of limbo

BY

read, but the kids suck. most of them are catholic and catholics make me feel ugly inside.

the other day a bunch of us were hanging out at recess. everyone was talking about receiving communion. I knew nothing of this and said so. no one said a word. mark calace asked me if I had been baptized. I didn't understand the word so I guessed it had never happened to me. I said this and linda cummings turned real pale. she said I was going to limbo.

I went home and found a picture of limbo in a time magazine my grandfather had. it was a photograph of a painting made in the 1500's. that night I had a bad nightmare. the river of life washed over my body, talking in trickles, warning me in my sleep that limbo was outside my door, ready to punish me with god. I do not like god. grandpa says my attitude is atheistic but I don't know what he's talking about.

blizzards. they are magical to me. and tonight's snowfall is wild. it draws me close to the window. I want to reach for it.

but first I've got to close the bedroom door and lock it so no one will disturb me. I feel strange, the same way I did when the rainstorm struck last week. I was alone in the house. it was growing dark and I turned on the lights. instead of the lights going on, the house plunged into blackness. all of a sudden, a flash of light came twitching out of the walls, from the room, from inside me. I screamed, hearing a bundle of voices tugging at me, pulling me down. after awhile, I found myself laying on the floor, listening to the sounds of the refrigerator being stuffed with food. my grandparents had come home from the supermarket.

I have locked the door. my head has a pressure building up from within. the snowstorm is wracking the trees outside. I can hear them sobbing. but I must take off my clothes. I take them off with the familiar urge I experience when I walk the streets of our neighborhood and see all the deserted houses I want to break into.

I rip my shirt and pants off as fast as I can. words are pouring out of my mouth, foreign, swollen noises that bang at the window in their need to escape. I open the window. the wind and the cold claw their way into my room. I am naked, except for my shiny black shoes and worn out socks. I stand on a chair and push myself onto the window sill. I sit there, the

snowflakes flogging me. below is a concrete patio and beyond that is the deep tangle of a ravine. the ravine drops away from our house very quickly, leading into the woods.

I wonder if I should jump. almost sexually, I want to leap into that ravine. I struggle to resist the temptation but I am weak, too weak to resist my need. the window sill cuts into my skin, filling up the hollows of my confusion, making me conscious of the chill for the first time in what seems to be years. I am older now, older than I was ten minutes ago. and because of this, my hunger to fly is shot with reluctance. . . . slowly, with deliberation, I climb out of the window and return to the room itself.

the winter brings snow. I always want to reach it. I will try not to but I don't know if I can. I really want to hurl myself out of the waiting room of my life towards something far, far away. these moments must be what the catholics call limbo.

PETER PLATE

EMIGRE MAGAZINE EVENT

Lewis MacAdams
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Andrej Toluzakov
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February 10 - March 24, 1985

Jack Kerouac

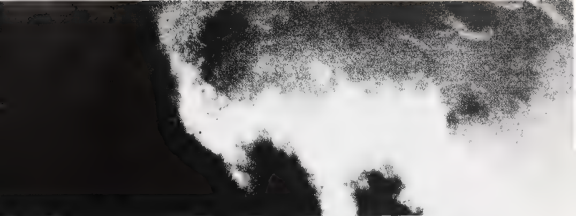
1 WILLIAM BUCKLEY'S FIFTH LINE 1969 2 WILLIAM BUCKLEY, JR.
3 D. HANDS 4 DUKE TABLOSKI, SOCIOLOGIST 5 JACK KEROUAC

1 WILLIAM BUCKLEY (Laughter) Gave that man a drink. Now Jack - Mister Kerouac - what I want to ask is this: To what extent do you believe that the Beat Generation is related to the Hippies? What do they have in common? Was this an evolution from one to the other? 2 JACK KEROUAC This is the older ones, y'see. I'm forty six years old. These kids are eighteen; but it's the same movement, which is apparently some kind of Dionysian Movement in late civilization. And which I did not intend any more than, I suppose, Dionysus did. Although I'm not Dionysus to your Areopagite . . . I should have been. 3 WILLIAM BUCKLEY Yeah, that's a point, yeah. 4 JACK KEROUAC No. It's a movement that's supposed to be licentious. But it isn't really. 5 WILLIAM BUCKLEY Well now, licentious in what respect? 6 JACK KEROUAC The Hippies are good kids. They're better than the Beats. You see, Ginsberg and I - well Ginsberg - anyway, we're forty. We're all in our forties, and we started this. And the kids took it up and everything; but a lot of hoods, hoodlums and Communists jumped on our backs . . . well, my back - not Ginsberg's. Ferlinghetti jumped on my back and turned the ideas that I had - that the Beat Generation was a generation of beatitude and pleasure in life and tenderness. But they called it in the papers the "Beat Mutiny," the "Beat Insurrection," words I never used. Being a Catholic I believe in order, tenderness and piety. 7 WILLIAM BUCKLEY Well, then your point was that it was a meeting rather than a movement, which you conceived as relatively pure, that has become ideologized and misanthropic and generally objectionable . . . 8 JACK KEROUAC A movement that was . . . a movement that was considered what? 9 WILLIAM BUCKLEY Pure. 10 JACK KEROUAC Yes, it was pure. In my heart.

11 D. HANDS They force you into an incredible position in the world when you want to protest, when you want to make your voice known in a benevolent way. You're pushed and clubbed, you know . . . 12 JACK KEROUAC You make yourself famous by protest. 13 D. HANDS That's not . . . who does? Not me. 14 JACK KEROUAC You. 15 D. HANDS No, I make myself famous by singing smut. 16 JACK KEROUAC I made myself famous by writing songs and lyrics about the beauty of the things I did . . . and ugliness, too. 17 D. HANDS You're a great poet, I'll admit. 18 JACK KEROUAC But you made yourself famous by saying, "Down with this, down with that! Throw eggs at this, throw eggs at that!" 19 D. HANDS I hope not. That's not what I want. 20 JACK KEROUAC Take it with you. I cannot use your abuse. You may have it back.

from Metropolitan Pictures
What Happened to Kerouac?
co-produced by Lewis MacAdams
and Mark Hand

Typeset
design
and typography
by
Zuzanna Glick



BYRON





THE VAULTS

by Hans Sluga

The vaults have existed since ancient times and will, I expect, go on existing into the deepest future. Once, the story goes, there were only salt domes in the mountainous craters of the city gates. We have all read the poem that begins "O, Zulek the Great, entered the caves of darkness to establish the sacred rules of our common humanity." I have been told that under the foundations of the secret chamber the builders once found human bones and that is stained with human blood.

But these are myths and rumors. The truth is that as long as we can remember the giant vaults have filled the salt domes and the secret rites have reverberated through their unfathomable depths.

Like all children I grew up not knowing about the vaults, aware only of certain dark sayings and of those hurried processions at the time of the new moon. One day, when I was sixteen, an older friend whispered a hint that kindled my curiosity. At the next new moon I pretended to fall asleep early and when the house was finally still I rose as quietly as I could, threw a cloak over myself to remain undisturbed, and passed the threshold that was leaving the city at midnight.

Soon we saw the dark cliffs before us and by a winding route I had never noticed we climbed into the canyon full of thickets and branches. Branches tore at my cloak as I tried to keep up with the singing men. Soon we saw the mysterious gate, already wide open to receive us.

"Men or women, man or woman," wailed the bearded guards as we came.

I did not know whether he would let me enter. With trembling fingers I gave him the coin I had been instructed to offer. And as if he suddenly recognized me he bent his bald shape down to my ear and whispered words that I have now forgotten, telling

me stride in a small door where I suddenly found myself alone.

In the dark chamber I was told to doze by a voice that came from high above in the hidden vault. Through windows in the wall the light of candles or torches threw dancing shadows on the wall. Here I was puzzled aside and out by attendants whose faces remained strangely shadowed by their robes. Next we entered the hall of images. Here I saw images of the stony heavens drawn in the most accurate manner, pictures of children turning in their mother's womb, of trees and mysterious mushrooms, bananas in embrace, horses rearing up against a morning sky, folds of garment drifting in an invisible breeze. There were the strangest images on the walls and even more strangely they seemed to stir other images that I half remembered from dreams. My head began to spin and a peculiar warmth began to spread from the center of my being through all my limbs and organs, till they became numbness with pulsating dreams.

The marble floor of the hall seemed suddenly soft and permeable and as if carried on a wind my body slipped finally through its surface (or so it seemed to me) into the cavity below.

Here in the deepest recess of the vaults, the earth seemed to be continuously groaning as in a permanent conception or birth. And all of a sudden I found myself together again with the singing crowd, all now stripped and perfumed and with bodies of pulsating beauty.

Next a whirlwind arose in our midst and grew and grew until it became a hurricane of light. Soon the storm was enveloping us all, lifting us off our feet and throwing us into the air where suddenly we found ourselves, neither man nor woman anymore, whirling in a starburst of bodies translucent with

heat and desire. My limbs and organs seemed to melt through the bodies of others around me. For moments I was them, it seemed, and they were me. But in a moment we were separated again, so be fast and separated with other and newer bodies. Then itself was extinguished, until a sudden burst of fire broke over us and for a moment our groaning became one with that from the deep fissures of the earth.

Then we fell back in stiffness and the limbs with which we had just been astrawed became separated again. All seemed suddenly suddenly distant like the shore of the sea heard from beyond a hill.

Before I could mean with fear I was lying down on a couch, covered by my robe. Once again attendants came and perfumed my body inside and out, finally throwing open the doors of the room in which I had been hidden. Outside, to my surprise, the morning light was already coloring the edge of the sky.

There was just enough time to slip back to my parents' house. Since then I have often returned to the vaults and each time the rites and mysteries have been subtly different. But each time I experience that sensation with the singing crowd, that melting of identities which are finally restored to us in that unbearable burst of fire.

There are those who want to abolish the vaults altogether. There are also those who want to bring the rites of the vaults into the daylight of the market place. Others maintain that the groaning heard from the earth is nothing but the voice of Babylon, the seducer, who destroys the goodness in human hearts. But all such thoughts are idle and useless.

For the vaults will continue forever and exist everywhere, not just in the mountains of our city, but in the silence of every human heart.



DIET MONDRIAN
AKA
MONDRIAN
PAINTING BY
DIANE BEST

Author: Lee Marshall, Missouri, USA

The warrior has almost complete freedom of choice for participation in the life of the cyber environment.

- 1 Take depth 40-80 cm among the "drifts," furniture (10-15 m) and natural and artificial "groves" in which there are artificial trees (trees that bloom with electronic flowers, and "blossoms" with the help of micro-atmosphere) as well as real trees.
- 2 The lake beds with a sharp elevation and entrance into a tunnel. There are 2 cylinders who "live" in front of the entrance. They interact like intelligent creatures, making contact with visitors.
- 3 A mountain "volcano" (height 25 m) is made of blue and black colored materials (oil or felt).
- 4 Crater (depth 15 m) is a tunnel. Out of the depths come sounds and a strong smell. Upon descending, the visitor looks inside in a well-lit circular dungeon where a series from the end of ancient Egypt (18th century B.C.) are played out as in reality, as well as a theatrical play of the visitor (by a controlled biological current).
- 5 The road for different profiles and sections, and serves as a watershed between the upper level (P) with transparent cold water and the lower level (P2) with heating colored water, and is insulated by controlled waves, cylinders. The cylinders combine "dissipate" up the wall.
- 6 At the end of the half-open tunnel a show is staged by means of biological objects (water immediately behind it).
- 7 Floating transport (with rotating) delivers a visitor to Zone 6 (by a corpse), and to Zone 6M through the cave certain scenes 1B and the waterfall. It is also possible to fly over to the corpse.
- 8 The corpse is installed by "automated procedures" and leads to the pavilion (see Museum of Berlin). Through the tunnel the visitor comes into the corpse and "amplified" B and through another tunnel V comes into Zone N.
- 9 The place for "bordering" the special corpses for those who do not wish to go through the "112" 14. Two cylinders (height 30 m) and 11 transfer people through the cold "flow" into Zone C.
- 10 Zone of choice. Entrance into the palace of "Spacemind" (but from the cylinder environment) Entrance to pavilion C.
- 11 The transparent palace of musical space. The inner volume and relief of the "walls" can change ("breathe") depending on the visitor's behavior (motion, gestures, voice, etc.).
- 12 "Soft" labyrinth (second floor) with a volume of 9,000 m³.
- 13 Mosaic decorated with change of environment (darkness, cold, vibration and ... music). Crossing point.
- 14 Visitor "enters" into the very essence of music (utilization and sound therapy by biophysiological music).
- 15 Since the visitor in the cyber environment wears a special costume, he flies from the world of sounds with the help of an electromagnetic field into Zone 7 (no matter what kind of flows and types with different kinds of sounds and birds ...). The visitor can float in the air, gradually getting closer, in the spirit of Hanser's Beech.
- 16 Transparent "drop" (the surface is like a mirror), which the visitor enters from the "breathing" pavilion of music. Here, this drop, is space, the visitor can interact (materially) by means of dynamic biological objects that can be seen from inside, as well as from outside. Partition for different vibrations (it has certain sound characteristics), especially smell. Special harmonic and overtones to a lot of different flows (as the background of white flowers on the "arrows" the visitor can observe 3-dimensional color pictures of scenes of various types ...).
- 17 Zone of choice. Fly from pavilion C. Almost the entire space is covered with 3-edged spiral forms (acoustically mobile). All of them have different heights and can "breathe" ("pull," "push," "suck," etc.) under the visitor's feet. Some of them are made of hot material.
- 18 Descending tunnel (100 m) carved into the rocks ends with a very bright shining platform on "valley-pavilion" of Beeth (but a long one). However, the visitor cannot see the platform or even feel it, because he "stands" in a heavy hot harmonic mist.



PLAN FOR 'ANTI-WORLD' BY LEV MUSELINSKY, 1964

[illegible]

BANG-MARTIN
 GROUP
 IN RUSSIAN
 BY
 J. C. MURPHY



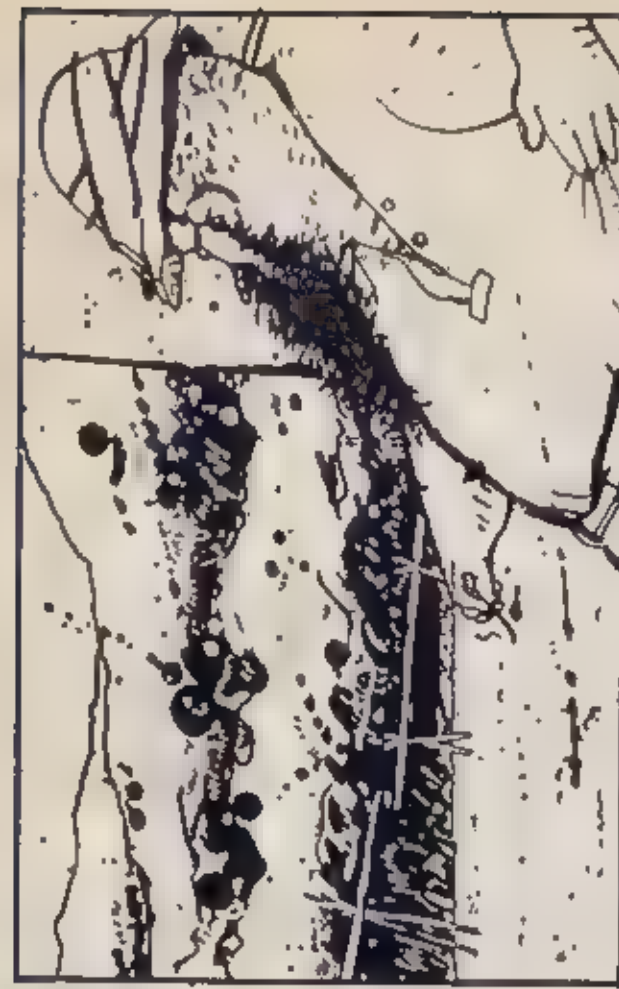
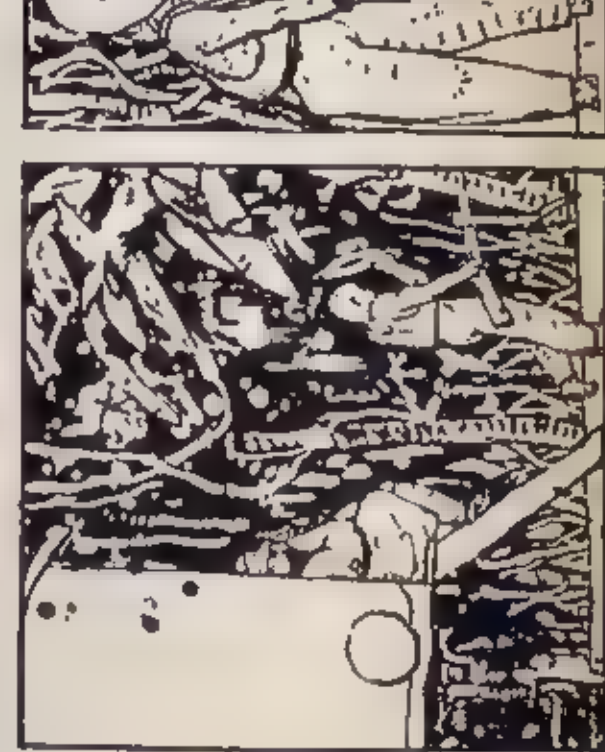
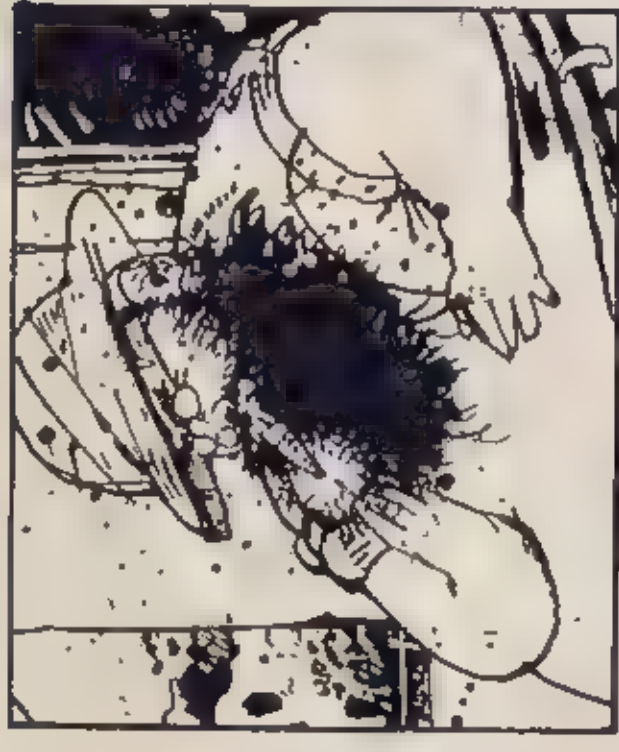
RUNNING WATER

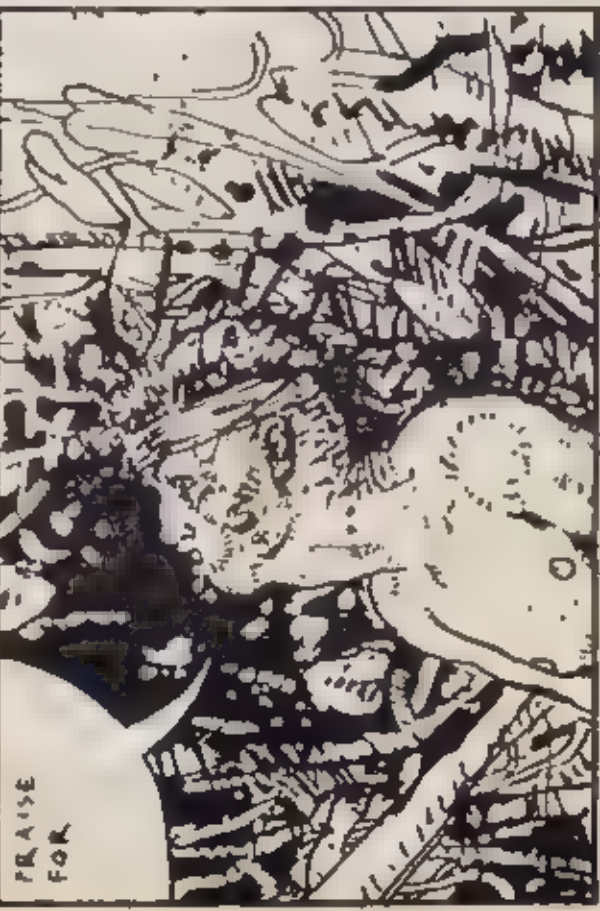
BERT VAN DER MEIJ

BY

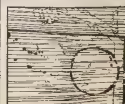
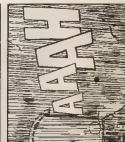
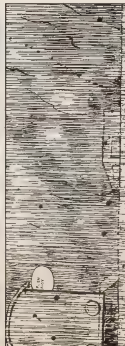
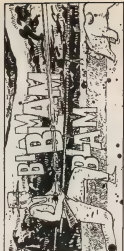
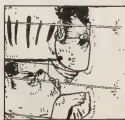
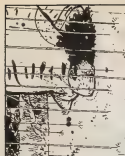


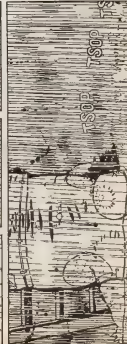
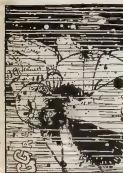
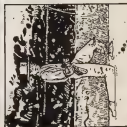
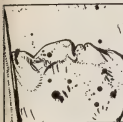
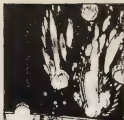
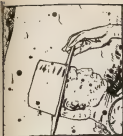
(handle this story as the Playboy-centerfold).

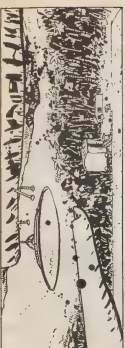
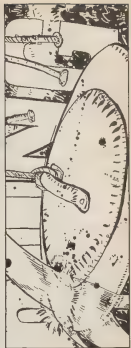
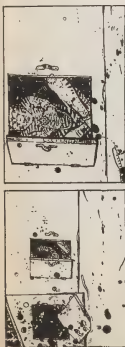












PAVING WAY: A PIONEER BY LINDA CRANWELL • THE LEFT SIDE OF THE
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Computer 'Mutant'

BY ALICE POLESKY

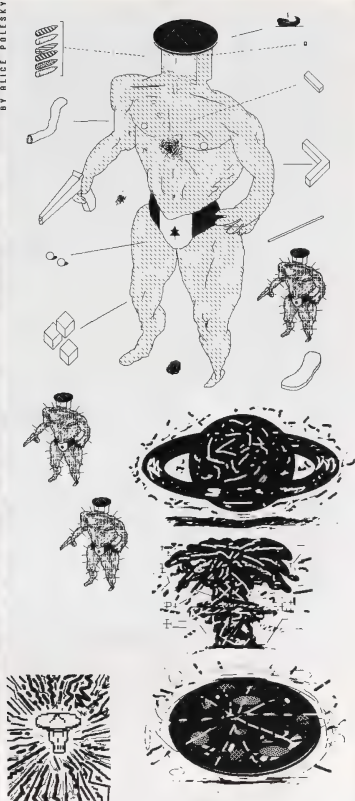
Working at his Mac terminal in a style perhaps best described as "Computer Mutant," Canadian John Hersey is an artist for the New Age. A strange array of creatures rolls off his table-top printer: spear-wielding demons, dogs, strange geometric beings. A native of Calgary, John was raised in Vancouver, whose vast wilderness he still loves and misses. His mother was a proto-pothole, so to speak, a jazz pianist who got high in the 50's with touring bands from San Francisco and Los Angeles. "She was creative support," John says. John had numerous arguments with his father, an American businessman. "I grew up disliking America," John says, though he also maintains that Canada and the U.S. are culturally very similar.

Although his youthful aspirations were towards surferhood, he started keeping a sketchbook in the seventh grade. Later, he studied commercial art, first in Vancouver, then afterward in Pasadena. These bouts of schooling were interrupted by rounds of construction work. (To finance the schooling), and a year of travel in Western Europe and Asia. Moving to east L.A. in 1976, John attended the Art Center in Pasadena, where he met (and later married) Valerie, who was also studying art. Dropping out of school in the fifth semester, John went to work in an art store. When the couple moved back to Vancouver in 1982, John, supported by Valerie, started to get work as an illustrator. He joined a printing cooperative, did poster printing, picture framing, and, finally, magazine illustrations. "Just trying to hustle anything I could get," John says. His first show, of silk screen prints (he had taught himself silkscreening), took place in Vancouver at the Fitch Gallery in 1982.

Finally, the couple moved to San Francisco in late 1983 for economic reasons. John soon discovered that many of the magazines in San Francisco were computer-related. These became - if you forgive the term - his primary users. In early 1984, he was already working for *PC World*, *Macworld*, *Microcommunications*, and others (he has also worked, and still does, for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Stereo Magazine*, *Mother Jones*, and the *Bay Guardian*). When Apple put out its Mac computer in January 1984, the Associate Art Director of *Macworld* gave seminars instructing artists how to use the Mac for drawing. John, who had never used a computer, was hooked. Part of the Mac's appeal was doubtless due to his love for schematics, isometric drawing. It's a synthetic cubist's dream," John says of the Mac. He admires the works of Lager and Duchamp. Another favorite is Picasso, whose enormous creative talent and energy continually drove him to seek out ever new media. "He would flip over this thing," says John, indicating his Mac terminal.

John gets plenty of opportunity to play with schematics for his *Macworld* illustrations, since these are required for the magazine's style ("I call them technical cartoons," says John). Using his Mac, he makes overlays, separate drawings that then combine into one picture. Beside the little terminal sits a small table-top printer which prints on most kinds of paper and, by means of cartridges, in up to eight colors.

"These overlays are just the beginning, the first steps for collages, silk screens, anything. I'd like to use the schematics to build sculptures, too, since theoretically you can build what you draw schematically." Another ambition is animation. "I can use the computer to generate stylized cartoons (like early Popeye - beautiful, amazing). Some day in the very near future, John will liberate these PRC and creatures from their screen, and out.



JOHN HERSEY



WOODCUT BY CARLOS ELLERENA AGUIRRE



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(Marcel Tzavara, Russian emigre poet 1907-1941.)

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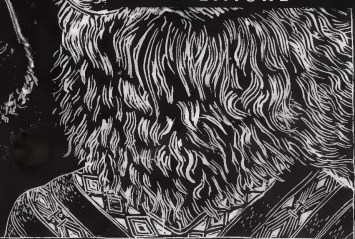




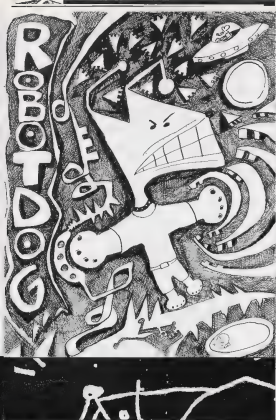
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POBOUT D&G IS PUBLISHED BY ENIGMA GRAPHICS 1985 SCOTT WILLIAMS
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EMIGRE



WOODCUT BY CARLOS LLERENA AGUIRRE



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(Thomas Twiss, Russian emigre poet 1922-1942)

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Why doesn't he take a job, you ask. Why didn't Rembrandt, Van Gogh or O'Keefe have regular jobs, you might as well ask. For Scott these are nearly-forgotten academic questions which he answered long, long ago. He jet paints and draws every day, from the time he wakes up till he falls asleep, with short interruptions for such inevitable distractions as replenishing his palette or filling his stomach with black coffee and quick snacks.

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Soon after moving in, Scott started to have regular exhibitions in the Haight and Mission districts. Opening receptions were always crowded and, best of all, he sold just enough to private art collectors to pay the rent and keep his head above water. But in July of 1983, he and all the other inhabitants of the Goodman Building were evicted.

The building was sold by the City's own urban renewal agency to a private developer who will likely make high-priced condominiums out of it. And even if not, by evicting everyone without providing appropriate and immediate alternatives, the City effectively dispersed and annihilated the fragile art community that had thrived there. When the tenants left without a violent show-off with the San Francisco police, Mayor Feinstein was quoted in the *San Francisco Chronicle* as saying: "The decision to leave peacefully and expeditiously will bring to a dignified conclusion an issue that has troubled San Francisco for ten years." And that was the end of it.

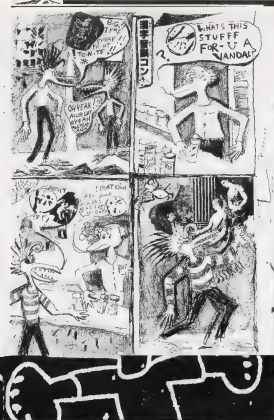
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(Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Russian design poster 1892-1941.)

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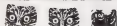
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(Marcel Duchamp, Russian émigré poster, 1922-1941.)

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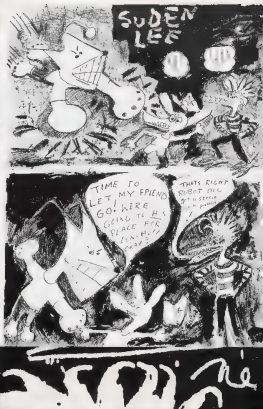
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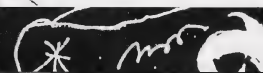
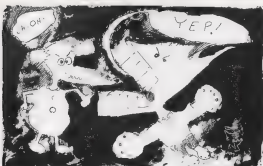
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BY MARC SUSAN





"Art does not pay its victims. It does not even know them."

(Fotomoto Tsontova, Russian engraving 1922-24.)

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"Art does not pay its victims. It does not even know them."

(Picasso, *Basque emigre poster 1937-38*)

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(Oshio Tanaka, Russian emigre prior 1972-PWT.)

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BY MARC SUSAN





CLLA



SCOTT WILLIAMS



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(Frisco Inktober, Susan emerges from 1972-1981.)

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BY MARC SUSAN



I recently paid a visit to Captain Beefheart and came away thinking that perhaps there is some justice in life after all.

Though critical accolades have rained down on Don Van Vliet throughout his nearly two decades of work as a musician, the mass audience has always seemed to prefer his musical innovations only after they've been adopted and diluted by lesser artists. Numerous popular artists cite Van Vliet as a major source of inspiration, and his musical thumbprint is evident in works by artists ranging from Laurie Anderson and Pili to Tom Waits and Grandmaster Flash. Van Vliet brings a startlingly elastic approach to composition and rhythm, and his music marries rural folk tales, free association, vaudeville, Dada and anthropological fantasy to a spectrum of sound that stretches from Charles Ives and Stravinsky to Delta blues, rock, and the natural sounds of the universe. And yet, Van Vliet's brilliance has never quite paid off at the bank. In fact, he spent the better part of the past decade living in a small, decidedly unluxurious trailer in the Mojave Desert.

BY KRISTINE MCKENNA



Don van Vliet

A.K.A.
CAPTAIN BEEFHEART



Eleven years ago Van Vliet took a shine to some land he chanced upon in Northern Arizona, and last December, after a decade of plotting and planning, he took up residence there. Based on a design by the legendary West Coast architectural firm Greene & Greene, Van Vliet's new home is a beautiful, airy structure perched on a heavily wooded hillside that slopes down to a lake. The house includes a runway studio equipped with a grand piano, and Van Vliet spends the majority of his time there painting and composing. It seems exactly the way a great artist should be living midway through his career.

Van Vliet is presently preparing for an exhibit of his paintings in Manhattan, about which he laughs, "I want to expose myself in New York." He was recently befriended by Julien Schnabel, the great white hope of the New York painting establishment (and a powerful ally), who purchased one of Van Vliet's paintings, sent him a gorgeous silk bathrobe to point in, then took him to his summer home in the Hamptons for a holiday. "Schnabel called, 'uncovered, and I like him,'" says Van Vliet of the friendship. "He's a very nice man, quite the humorist, and he has a good perspective on his career."

Van Vliet is ready and waiting to record his next album for Virgin, but is without a recording contract in his homeland — a situation which is nothing short of a national disgrace. The creepiest television can be flexed to the tune of millions, and nobody will pay for Seaforth to make a record! When his next record comes out, there's no good possibility he will tour, because, as he says, "I have a lot of friends out there. But Reaganites have made touring very difficult. I can't afford it anymore!" Van Vliet is also interested in periods literature with M.E.T. physicist Leonard Winner, who is at work on a biography of Captain Seaforth.

Van Vliet was in high spirits the day we met, and is a cordial and glibest host who spent the afternoon dragging out prized possessions like a child showing his favorite toys. Among them exhibited his favorite shoes (black patent leather), a photograph of Albert Einstein (at whom Van Vliet says, "He's gotta be the coolest thing!"), and a black Yves Saint Laurent coat he bought in New York many years ago.

Critics have been hating the genius of Don Van Vliet for so long that the reader's response is apt to be so of, "Yeah, we know already!" But again, I must say that Don Van Vliet is truly an extraordinary man. First, he is that master of creatures — a calibrator who's interested in discussing things other than himself. Conversationally, his frame of reference is dazzlingly diverse, and he makes mindboggling leaps in the sequence of his thought. He'll often say something and follow it with a comment that seems to have no connection to the subject under discussion. Five minutes or five days later, it will dawn on you that this "buddy" comment actually made perfect sense. He was just thinking a little faster, a little more intelligently than you were. He is a superb storyteller, a great wit, and a well-read man with an impressive library.

Van Vliet is quite the character for those he admires, and he has read not numerous books, heisting I must read them. Among his favorites: William Hoffman, Jean Dillen, Raymond Chandler, A. L. Cieling ("He wrote this book about being called The Sweet Science that is unbelievably good"), Wyndham Lewis and Ross Macdonald. Other things he loves include: the sun in Arles, France; from Alaska: Barry Martin Cagney; Mumbley (a pig); Wilcox Newton oil paintings ("They make this incredible color called Quantum Light."); Suckert ("That cute fish with a bump on its back that looks like a water buffalo"); Albert Einstein; and his wife Jan. A beautiful and intelligent woman who obviously has a hand in maintaining Van Vliet's equilibrium. Jan met the Captain when she was 18 and married him six weeks later. They've been together for 14 years and their marriage is a credit to the institution.

Van Vliet is as voracious in his dislikes as he is in his pleasures, and among the things that annoy him are Walt Disney (for his cloying and paternalistic treatment of the animal kingdom and the way he used Thelvin's music in *Fantasia*), mass popular music ("It's designed to hypnotize people, and that seems to be what they want — and that's why my music has never been popular"), and senior citizens behind the wheel of large unresponsible vehicles ("None of them have bad driving licenses").

During my visit I happened to see some amazing photographs of Van Vliet as a child growing up in Glendale, California. Snapshots of the Van Vliet family gathered around the Christmas tree or a Thanksgiving turkey suggest that the Captain had no idyllic childhood, and the photos yielded no clue whatsoever as to how or why Van Vliet developed the profoundly original taste on the universe that fuels his art. I was particularly struck by a photo of Van Vliet at age five, dressed up in a cowboy costume, waving a toy pistol in the air and staring into the camera with the same open, fearless, intensely curious gaze he has today. From the start he was already a boy with a plan; 42 years on and he hasn't betrayed it. Herewith, a few Don mats...

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REASONS**

A DAY IN THE LIFE
I paint every day. Painting is a color straggle, and I look forward to putting it on in the morning. I find painting more pleasurable than music, although God, I love music. I've been listening to a lot of Beethoven lately. I can't compose all the time and just write what I think is the best thing I've ever done. I work on my paintings, and while the paint is drying, I'll write a song. I usually don't go to bed until around 4:30 in the morning, and then I get up at 5:30 because I like to see the sun and the moon together in the sky. Occasionally I eat breakfast. If I could find a town I'd go to and live and then they had lawns in the 1930s, but they all seem to be gone. Like Laguna. Hopkins said, they're gone like a turkey in a storm. There's nothing happening now and soon has become a matter of getting into reality. We can live inside and they can't do anything about that. Occasionally, like a gopher coming out of its hole, I go somewhere for provisions. I always hope I'll make it back because I don't really like to drive. Well, I could use a beer, but out of the corner of my eye and drink off the roof! So, I spend my time reading, painting, writing music, watching television... that's about it. That's about it and Jan and I dance.

THEY HATE ME HERE
Throughout my musical career I've tried to be an American, but the America I think about isn't popular like the America that politicians and other stupid people in high places try to sell. Still, I can't think of a better place to live. I mean, the free life

does it nice. No, I'm just kidding... we do have more freedom than many countries have, but it's still false. Gravity is the music, and every time I look in the mirror and see that flesh growing off that ball I'm reminded of that. My eyes look like sawdust says that that's quite close to it. Either that, or a real interesting mad made up the picture.

SKETCHES
[Don insists that he has a recording of "If I See You In My Dreams" by Ukulele line, widely known as the voice of Jimmy Crichton, who is known for his recording of "When You Wish Upon A Star." He says, "I mean I mean I mean! That was the good old days when people really gave a damn. That's a sad song, isn't it? Nobody knows how to make sad songs anymore. They all want to hear like vamps now. Songs break my soulless record of my heart these days.]

DUKE ELLINGTON
You don't play jazz in a hurry, and that seems to be they're doing these days. I don't need that, I go back to Duke Ellington and people like that. One time I went to see Duke Ellington in New York and being around after the show and asked him for his autograph. He took out this beautiful gold pen and said "Oh yeah" in that cool voice. He says to me, "I'm leaving now to go on a cruise with the boys" — the boys being the Mafia, of course. He was hooked up with the Mafia, but they had electricity and so did he, so they hand him to play at their party. You know, my music, "I let me buy you a drink," and he said, "No. I'm waiting for my chauffeur, and one of us has to be sober." This chauffeur was upstairs with a girl and Ellington was waiting on him. I asked him why he'd come on his chauffeur and he replied, "He's my chauffeur. He drove me." In other words, he was real good to the person who drove him around. He had on the watch that had cost \$50,000, with diamonds all over it, and he had so much class he made a look like a Times. He left me saying this "Keep your top halves!" I said, "I was gonna try." I let you die. He was really a brilliant man, and the exact nature of his musical genius is it inspires me. He did and went, there was a small gesture in exactly the right place. He didn't like marmalade, obviously, and there was nothing random about his music. It's not like he just came up and I can't get. Not too many musicians really know how to use mimesis. Roland Kirk and so did Billie Holiday, Stravinsky, Beethoven, and Charles Parker. Charles Parker was wonderful. His cause is through the sky.

BIG BROTHERS
[Mike Jean brings him a slice of chocolate cake.] I can't think that chocolate I'd make me fly around the right like a moth or a laser fly. You know, I used to think those little green things that fly around flies were flies, and they probably were. [Points to a large spider on the wall.] Look what I have on display. [He's lovely.] In Mexican his name is Papa Puente Largo [translation: Daddy Long Legs]. Would you like some Vitamin B for the aftereffect you'll get from this cake?

SYNTHESIZERS
Most people don't know how to play synthesizer, so they're having a bad effect on music. That people who play synthesizer are doing it wrong. You should hear me on a synthesizer. The original one that Moog designed was a brilliant machine, and I definitely have one if I could afford it.

RICHARD BRANSON AND THE NEXT UP
[Richard Branson gets down herring up that jarred fanned by Bey Gorge. I'll make me a Richard. Actually, I'm really Don. You know me, Richard? Actually, Branson's okay. I know, he's always been nice to me. He's better than Branson's, the second richest man in England, and that's why he's a lot of people don't like him. The first richest man in England is probably a woman, though I'm not really sure because they don't let me into these circles. But who'd I want to be those circles? And that's why they were in the business? I don't let me in. You know, the British are funny. I can't believe how much they drink. They get up in the morning and drink while they're coming over here!]

SMOKING: A CYCLOPACIFIC CONSPIRACY
They used to have this billboard at Hollywood and Vine that sent out these huge smoke rings. Oh man, how could anybody not smoke after seeing those huge mechanical smoke rings? The circle is round, the circle of the smoke ring, the circle of the tobacco cycle — a very cyclic campaign. It was hard to quit cigarettes but I quit — Luckys too — because I was too good to burn [laughing]. No, actually I quit so I'd be able to do anything I wanted with my nose, and I don't usually hit really high notes now. I smoke a pipe now, and knowing the damn thing it is so hard it's really taught me patience. The *Grove* Art of Smoking by Alfred P. Darbish is a very good book on the subject. It has a huge collection of pipes and I got this particular one on Duke Street in London in 1971. I like London.

THE HAVES VS. THE HAVESNOT
I used to set up some pretty funny things onstage. One time I bought myself a pair of blue suede shoes because I had this silly outfit and

got an adrenal pump in green for Art Tripp [Branan personified with the Magic Band]. During the show that night I started seeing the audience about these wonderful original shoes I'd gotten that day, and Art comes out and says, "Hansen... your shoes are just like mine." The salesman told me they were originals! "So I said, 'Do you get yours at the Ford Road?' I said, 'I got my whole lot. I recently talked to Art. He's a choreographer now, and I predicted one of my albums that he would eventually become a choreographer. He sure was a great person!"

REAGAN
Reagan has had a big effect on me, and I hate to think of what four more years of him might do. Good? Good? If I had a cannon, I'd let it explode! I think there's a chance he might be taken out of office this time. I think, of course, the odds are never been there. I mean, he hasn't even had a badbagger commercial. That's like order of his. Why doesn't the man get a face lift? He's certainly a perfect candidate for one. He looks like a pop-culture head that didn't come off. You know, before Reagan was elected to office, I predicted that he and Margaret Thatcher would do the nuclear pact dance, and the only reason he was elected to office was because people are so goddamn dumb. No guy

NAM'S WORST TRAITS
Cruel and posing are mankind's worst traits I don't like that damn violence, that bloodshed crap either. I've got a shotgun, but the only reason I have it is a home defense item. It's a lovely instrument. I would never shoot an animal or a human with it.

EVIL ITS ROOTS AND ORIGINS
I think at one time there was no evil and that evil emerged in some way. It's an act. I was thinking about the money after the morning, and I think that unless someone's really got the cord up against, people are responsible for what they do. But hell, there's no way I believe in capital punishment.

BACK TROUBLE
Don't ever let 'em operate on your back. That's how we lost Jeff Chandler.

THE ORIGINAL MERRY MEN
One time when I was five years old I was lying on the grass and watching the TV show, and we were watching this program featuring this old bird that this woman named Lisa Ray Horton was in. All of a sudden the top of her dress fell off and I saw the original Muppet Moose! There were these two animals looking at me like two big eyes while I sat there with my folks! They were laughing, but I didn't laugh. I got looked.

LUCILLE BALL
Lucille Ball is the only person who knows how to use her uterus. She's got a good God. God How about that movie of hers, *The Long, Long Tramp*? I first saw that at the Alex Theatre in Glendale, California, and seeing it made me never want to reflect any thing. Remember what happened to that trait? [Author's note: He didn't. Informal readers feel free to write in.] They didn't know what a whole lot of knives were.

ARTISTIC ANGST
Most people are so goddamned stupid they can't use their own uterus are doing, and if they're oppressed at all during their lifetime, it's usually for the wrong reasons. I once saw a woman making her face on the glass on a Van Gogh painting. Not only did they have no reflective glass on Van Gogh, they had a glassed frame on it. Can you imagine Van Gogh in a glassed gold frame? He never made any money in his life. He couldn't have a gold frame. Nobody could afford a Van Gogh. I saw this woman making up her face on his painting, and I had to sigh.

HENRY MILLER
Henry Miller is so many. A trash poet. I never liked the guy. He always had all these nude girls around. Some they made him look better, but why use human girls in props? I think he's a jerk.

THE APOCALYPSE
I really make no difference whether the apocalypse is there or not. Though it sure is a pain in the neck, it's probably do what I do regardless of whether anyone took any notice. It helps when people appreciate what you do, but I'm a realist, so thanks for the hand, but don't touch me.

BRITNICK
I could use a little gold, but other than that I don't have any problems and I never have, knock on wood. So yeah, I plan to stay here for a while, to have to, because gravity's holding me down — it's holding on all day. There has been fun we could jump if it wasn't for gravity. Might be high for a while. Actually, though, I like life as we know it. I'm not sure. I like it more with the whole, I'm not sure. I like it more now. Read loud.

Photo: [unreadable]

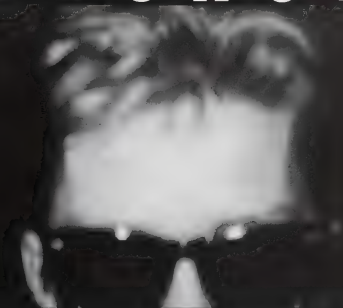
So Cal

*Here if anywhere else in America, I seem to hear
the curious language of the Masses.
W.B. YEATS*

Those who came from places
that produced corn, wheat, butter & eggs
to a place that produces celluloid images, computer chips,
drive-in taco stands & aerospace components
have never stopped wondering, "What am
I doing here?" They believe some destiny awaits the place.
They believe this because somebody told them so.
It's a belief that's really a lot more like a feeling.
They can't remember who it was that sold them
all those neon poems
you hear echoing through this cathedral of empty
headed intentions they call home. The only false
note here is my referring to them as "they."



ODD SHOTS.



Since

9

These are photographs that were left over after all others were used; photographs that never fitted the "series" Series. I always had to produce series (or so I believed) in order to get a statement across. I wanted to document California, my new homeland. I knew what to photograph, I was practically brought up on American television series and had a totally preconceived idea of California. But I had to do it in a series. The good shot was not enough. You need at least 5 or 8 or 10 strongly related images to get the idea across or to prove that you knew what you were doing. So series it was. ~~excites~~ ~~prove~~

Now, looking back at these photographs, I would say they're okay, they get the point across. But the stuff that still ~~excites~~ me, after 3 years, are these oddshots. These ~~oddshots~~ photographs ~~excites~~ happened mostly by accident; unintentional, they are missed shots, or shots I made while winding the camera after putting in a new film. Great shots, but they never seemed to fit the series I was working on. Although for some reason these are the shots that seem to me the most ~~excites~~ ~~prove~~ in America. I decided the time had come to present ~~excites~~ slightly manipulated, randomly deranged and knitted together in order to create one ~~excites~~ series.

series

?

Integral

Yet

honest and original and
honest expression
of my response
to California/America





terj 3, officer of the day 4. olive
 drab. 5. overdraft. 6. overdrawn.
odd (od), *adj.* 1. differing in nature
 from what is ordinary. 2. peculiar
 in an eccentric way. 3. leaving a re-
 mainder of 1 when divided by 2. 4.
 close to or little more than 300-odd
 dollars. 5. being one of a pair or set;
 an odd shoe. 6. left over after all
 others are used. 7. occasional or
 various: odd jobs. —*oddly*, *adv.* —
 odd'ness, *n.* —*Syn.* 1. extraordinary,
 strange, unusual.
odd-ball (od'bôl'). *Slang* — *s* —



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LEONID LAMM

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